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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

OSD DECLASSIFICATION/RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS ON FILE

General A. J. Goodpaster, USA
Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SHAPE, APO New York 09055

Dear General Goodpaster: (a perception, or estimate)

(S) Your letter of May 28, 1974 expressed two concerns that are widely shared here. The first is overemphasis by some on basing warning on deduction of enemy intentions rather than assessment of capabilities. The second shared concern is overattempts to quantify warning as the time prior to D-day instead of the time following a Pact M-day. As you know, we have attempted to reverse these perceptions during the negotiations of at least the last two MC-161 documents. Post mortems on the Yom Kippur War, as well as those on the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968 and other past crises, fully support your points on the need to follow developing enemy capabilities -- his preparations for war -- and being prepared to increase our own readiness posture as part of a policy to control or defuse any crisis situation in Europe. We attempted in the preparations of the Warning of War section of MC-161-74 to clarify the difference between warning based on Pact capabilities versus intentions, and to put more emphasis on warning based on improved capabilities. This effort met some resistance from other nations, and so the Warning of War section is not as clear as it might be. We will pursue this in the conference for next year's MC-161, which will also provide you an opportunity to put forward your view through your representative.

Insert A

(S) Your thoughts on these matters are particularly valuable to us at this time. We have been making a broad review of our intelligence procedures and capabilities to support all levels of crisis management, conventional as well as nuclear. As a part of this effort, we have initiated new studies to determine what actions the Warsaw Pact must take in order to make the transition from their peacetime posture to a posture in which they are capable of employing forces against NATO. In turn, we are determining the observability of each of these actions. As discussed in the "warning of war" section of MC-161-74, we now know that the Pact must make changes in its posture and make other preparations before they will

whether or not they may have made (or yet made)

any final decision to do so.

TO:

DATE 31 Dec 1976

DATE 31 Dec 1982

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ready for war. In these studies, particular emphasis is being given to understanding where actions consistent with preparations for war are significantly different or more numerous than those actions which support their routine exercises. As these studies become more definitive, discussions with NATO on how they and the resultant changes in intelligence collection, processing, and dissemination can better support development of procedures for increasing the readiness of NATO forces will be essential.

(S) Our efforts to sharpen the focus of "strategic warning" on a near-real-time assessment of growing capabilities for force employment should provide a basis for procedures whereby individual NATO nations can increase their readiness posture in response. However, the availability of such information poses several problems on which your thoughts would be appreciated. The heart of these problems is the current very limited exchange among NATO nations of warning information, or near-real-time information on increases in Warsaw Pact preparations for war. Some provisions for bilateral exchanges already exist. However, multilateral exchanges have been hindered by clumsy procedures, uncertainty over channels to be used, and a certain reluctance to compromise security of sensitive information. We must continue to find ways to improve the exchange of information in a crisis. At the same time, you will recognize that we cannot afford compromise of details of our intelligence collection capabilities.

(S) Perhaps one way to help this process is to fully inform all nations concerned of the fact that there would indeed be indicators of change in posture, that these changes would take at least a little time, and that we have some capabilities to detect them. This should lend encouragement to the concept of national increases in readiness, provided they do not result merely in a state of readiness until they get hard evidence of an actual enemy decision to

(S) Meanwhile the problem remains that some people think that until the nations declare M-day, virtually no increase in Allied readiness posture can be expected, regardless of the degree of Warsaw Pact buildup. I want to assure you that US forces will respond as necessary to any increased Warsaw Pact readiness posture even if declaration of M-day is not appropriate (as was done during the Berlin Crisis of 1961). Our actions could include selectively augmenting units or deploying additional augmentation units, increasing readiness for deployment of other forces, and marshalling our strategic mobility resources and a range of other steps, as well as returning dual-based forces. We would thereby both increase our own readiness posture and compress the time necessary to respond should M-day subsequently

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be declared. We believe that other nations should plan to do likewise. Moreover, by demonstrating resolve and acting promptly on very early moves of the Warsaw Pact, deterrence would be strengthened and thus possibly prevent the need for declaring M-day at all.

(S) In summary, I fully agree with your view that we should focus on understanding enemy capabilities rather than trying to deduce his intentions during a crisis. This focus is necessary in order to support the priority development of procedures and exercises which would enhance NATO's capabilities to increase its readiness posture to match such actions by the Pact. I also agree with your view that actions to acquire this capability should be taken primarily by the nations concerned, without seeking basic alterations in the current NATO Alert System, which as you correctly point out should be the vehicle for coordination of efforts rather than their instigation. Your thoughts on specific readiness measures each of the NATO countries could establish, which do not now exist, or for which some simpler form of national authorization might be sought, would be appreciated. In addition, it would be helpful if their relationship to particular Pact moves could be included. In this overall connection, earlier NATO reports on this subject should be brought up to date and possibly expanded. I am presently encouraging development of national capabilities along these lines. I am also prepared to support appropriate readiness initiatives that you may recommend.

With warm personal regards,

Sincerely,

(though of course we need to be careful not to initiate inadvertently a process which might be termed "ping pong escalation".)

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